

In my youth, I remember NYC as a city that supported quite a wide array of newspapers. Since then, ownership of newspapers (and the editorial viewpoints they represent) has narrowed substantially. Just one effect is the prevalence of negative campaigning in politics; they slam their opponents rather than dwell on explaining their positions on issues. It's gotten so that even knowing what the issues are is optional in a run for office! And having a position on issues is a liability.

Television magnifies this issue, as it does so many other things.

Far from being onerous, existing regulation is either inadequate, under-enforced, or both. The sales-oriented fluff that serves as "public service" is an embarrassment. Diversity of opinion is nearly non-existent. If the stated goal were to "dumb down" public discourse to the point where democracy is crippled, then our public media could hardly be doing a better job.

It is not the media's job to deliver the tools that democracy needs to function. It is media's sole job to earn a profit. Period. Government regulation is what drives public need. Do not allow private business to usurp government function once again by dictating the false maxim that "what's good for our industry is good for America". The media got an enormous free ride with the give-away of major bandwidth just a few years ago. Public discourse should be what the industry will give back, not what else we the people can give away to them.

Democracy demands an informed electorate. Educating the public has not proved profitable. The media is required to seek profit. So the only solution is government regulation to keep the public informed, democracy can function. This is the charge of the FCC. Please don't renege on this responsibility!